

We have all heard stories of African and Hispanic Americans—including many well known actors, athletes, law enforcement officers, and legislators—who have been stopped for the traffic infraction known as “Driving While Black” or “Driving While Brown.” Our legislation will allow us to ascertain the extent such profiling is occurring on a nationwide basis, help increase police awareness of the problem, and determine if any broader response is warranted.

The limited data available indicates that the problem of racial profiling in traffic stops is serious. For example, a recent study by the Orlando Sentinel found that 70% of the persons stopped on I-95 were African-American, even though they only made up less than 10% of the driver population. A court ordered study in Maryland found that more than 70% of drivers stopped on I-95 were African American though they made up only 17.5% of drivers, while another study conducted in conjunction with a New Jersey civil rights lawsuit found that minorities were nearly five times as likely as non-minorities to be stopped for traffic violations along that state's turnpike.

Further evidence of racial profiling by law enforcement was evident in the case of *State v. Soto*, in which Superior Court judge, Robert E. Francis ruled that troopers were engaging in racial profiling on the southernmost segment of the New Jersey Turnpike. This in turn raises troubling questions regarding the extent to which law enforcement officials may be unfairly targeting Hispanic and Asian Americans under the guise of immigration enforcement.

If our citizens are to trust our justice system it is imperative that all forms of discrimination be eliminated from law enforcement. The Traffic Stops Statistics Act of 1999 will help give Congress the tools to assess and understand a dangerous form of such discrimination—racial profiling in traffic stops.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR POLICE OFFICER SAFETY ACT OF 1999

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the National Assistance for Police Officer Safety Act. This legislation is a simple, straightforward measure that will give qualified active duty law enforcement personnel carrying proper identification the ability to carry their firearms outside of their local jurisdiction, including across State lines. I am pleased to announce that my friend and colleague Congressman STEVEN ROTHMAN joins me in authoring this bill.

The law enforcement community has long sought a unified federal law to resolve the inconsistent and fickle ‘right to carry laws’ that pervade State statutes. This bill will give active law enforcement officers the ability to protect themselves and their families from retaliations by criminal stalkers seeking to harm them. Further, this bill increases public safety by adding more armed, qualified peace officers to our streets.

Recently, police officers from my own district traveled to Washington to participate in ceremonies honoring fallen law enforcement

officers. During their visit they expressed great concern at being forced to be unarmed on public streets without protection against unsuspected retaliation. This measure will give all police officers—all of us—an added measure of protection.

INTRODUCTION OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT OF 1999

HON. RAY LAHOOD

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the anniversary of former President Abraham Lincoln's death to celebrate his life. Today, I am introducing the Abraham Lincoln bicentennial Commission Act of 1999. This bill will establish a commission, the purpose of which would be to make recommendations to Congress for a national program to honor former President Abraham Lincoln in the year 2009, the bicentennial celebration of his birth.

Abraham Lincoln has gone down in history as one of our country's greatest Presidents. As our sixteenth President, Abraham Lincoln served the country during a most precarious era. While most of the country looked to divide, President Lincoln fought for unity and eventually saved the Union. With the belief that all men were created equal, President Lincoln led the charge to free all slaves in America. Without the determination and vision of President Lincoln, the country, as we know it, may not exist today.

President Lincoln also serves as a national symbol of the “American Dream.” Born of humble roots in Hardin County, Kentucky on February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln rose to the Presidency though a legacy of honesty, integrity, intelligence and commitment to the United States of America.

In 1909, America celebrated the centennial of President Lincoln's birth in a manner deserving of his accomplishments. Congress approved placing the image of President Lincoln on a first-class stamp for the first time, made President Lincoln's birth a national holiday, and passed legislation leading to the construction of the Lincoln Memorial here in Washington, D.C. Further, President Roosevelt approved placing the image of President Lincoln on the penny.

As in 1909, the Congress should again honor President Lincoln in 2009, by establishing the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. Through this Commission, Congress will be able to demonstrate its appreciation for Abraham Lincoln's accomplishments and ultimate sacrifice for our country. This Commission will identify and recommend to Congress appropriate actions to carry out this mission and, through the recommendations of this Commission and subsequent acts of Congress, the American people will benefit by learning about the life of President Lincoln.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of President Lincoln by supporting the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act of 1999.

TAXES AND HOME OWNERSHIP

HON. PHIL ENGLISH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. ENGLISH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of the preservation and extension of a very important benefit to all tax-paying Americans.

We all know the significance of today, April 15th. And as lamentable as today is for every hard-working American who strives to save income for themselves and their families, there is one component of the federal tax code every citizen should be granted. I am speaking about the tax deduction for interest paid on debt secured by the purchase of a home.

Owning a home, Mr. Speaker, has to be, without doubt, the one goal every American shares. And far be it for the federal government to stand in the way of that goal. What better way could the federal government assist with this dream than by granting every American a tax deduction on interest paid on a home mortgage.

The benefits of home ownership are many. Most importantly, home ownership strengthens neighborhoods and families. It strengthens neighborhoods in that those who live in a home will also invest in the area in which they live, thereby supporting vibrant and prosperous communities. And owning a home financially strengthens families, especially for parents who work hard to provide for their children.

Homes, Mr. Speaker, for families all across this land that live in one and hope to own one, are the greatest institutions our nation can build. That is why I rise today in strong support of, and encourage all members of this body to support, a resolution my colleague, Representative ROUKEMA, will introduce on the extension to every American of a tax deduction for interest paid on debt secured by a first or second home.

Home ownership is the backbone of our great nation and must remain a dream within the grasp of every American.

TRIBUTE TO FREEHOLDER THERESA BROWN ON BEING NAMED “FREEHOLDER OF THE YEAR” BY THE NEW JERSEY CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

HON. JIM SAXTON

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 1999

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, on April 22, 1999, the New Jersey Conference of Mayors will bestow to Theresa D. Brown, Esq. the Freeholder of the Year Award for her dedicated service to Burlington County and the State of New Jersey. Having worked closely on several issues with Ms. Brown, I believe that the Conference of Mayors made an outstanding selection.

Ms. Brown is the daughter of retired Air Force M/SGT Walter and Julie Brown. As a military dependent, Ms. Brown grew up in exotic locales including France, the Philippines, Hawaii, and several other places within the United States.